

Champagne week-end

On Friday May 29th, the Company's unofficial, self-appointed wine-tasting committee set off on an exploratory visit to the Champagne region of France. Smoothly transported by Eurostar, SNCF and an amiable coach-driver to the Hotel Castel Jeansson in the small town of Ay, the first sampling took place at le Vieux Puits restaurant.

On Saturday, after early morning swims for the Master and a (very) small number of her fellow members, said coach-driver took us to the cave of Feneuil-Pointillart, producers of Premier Cru Champagne from the Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay, grapes, and where much sampling and buying occurred.



Then for the more cultural element of the trip, we went to Rheims, with its superb cathedral, and fine collection of shops, bars and restaurants.

After briefly pausing at the hotel, dinner called us to the restaurant de l'Abbaye in Haut-Villers. The Bailiff admitted to a small degree of panic when, calling in the morning to confirm that we would be coming, the restaurant receptionist first denied all knowledge and then said that the restaurant was fully booked. Happily, a diversion between the Cave and Rheims, resulted in a successful negotiation with the patron. It was true that the restaurant was fully booked – to provide a meal for a function in Rheims. In the event, we were the only diners, and enjoyed an excellent meal outside on a terrace, ably cooked by a lone female chef, and beautifully served by a charming and sparky waitress. The wines were also superb.



On Sunday, we bade farewell to our driver at Epernay station, where a cheer went up as the train arrived bearing a 'Réserve' sticker for our exclusive coach, and apart from a tedious piece of queuing at the Gare du Nord, the committee returned well-sampled, well-fed and well-stocked.